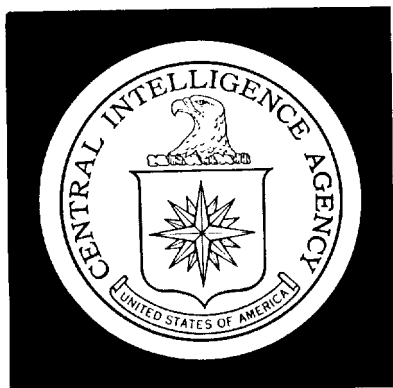


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Iran - Saudi Arabia: The Shah may commit Iran to  
aid Faysal if Saudi Arabia is attacked.

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IRAN - SAUDI ARABIA: THE SHAH MAY COMMIT  
IRAN TO AID KING FAYSAL IF SAUDI ARABIA IS ATTACKED.

THE SHAH SAID LAST SUNDAY THAT HE IS "VERY  
CLOSE TO A COMMITMENT" TO COME TO THE SAUDI'S DE-  
FENSE, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] HE ADDED THAT IRAN'S OWN SECURITY REQUIRE-  
MENTS DEMANDED THAT HE RESPOND FAVORABLY TO FAYSAL'S  
REQUEST FOR SUPPORT. THE SHAH HAS ASKED THE US TO  
LEASE OR SELL HIM FOUR TANKER AIRCRAFT SO THAT  
IRANIAN FIGHTERS OR GROUND SUPPORT CREWS WILL NOT  
HAVE TO BE STATIONED IN SAUDI ARABIA.

SUCH A COMMITMENT TO SAUDI ARABIA WOULD BE,  
FOR THE SHAH, A LOGICAL OUTGROWTH OF HIS OBSESSION  
WITH THE FUTURE SECURITY OF THE PERSIAN GULF AND  
OF HIS SPECIAL CONCERN ABOUT THE STABILITY OF THE  
SAUDI MONARCHY. IN RECENT MONTHS, IRAN HAS ALSO  
PROPOSED A MUTUAL DEFENSE ARRANGEMENT BETWEEN IRAN,  
SAUDI ARABIA, AND OTHER MODERATE GULF STATES TO  
KEEP OUT RADICAL ARAB AND SOVIET INFLUENCE AFTER  
THE BRITISH WITHDRAW FROM THE AREA IN 1971.

IRANIAN OFFICIALS HAVE OFTEN EMPHASIZED THAT  
THEIR COUNTRY MUST ASSUME MAJOR RESPONSIBILITY FOR  
THE SECURITY OF THE GULF, AND THE SHAH MAY REGARD  
A DEFENSE COMMITMENT TO FAYSAL AS AN OPPORTUNITY  
TO REINFORCE IRAN'S PRIMACY IN THE AREA. THE SHAH  
IS LIKELY TO BRING INCREASING PRESSURE ON THE US  
TO PROVIDE HIM WITH THE MILITARY EQUIPMENT HE BE-  
LIEVES NECESSARY FOR IRAN TO FILL ITS ROLE AS  
"PROTECTOR" OF THE GULF. [REDACTED]

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